

TRANSPORTING YOUR CHILDREN SAFELY: TRAFFIC SAFETY TIPS

The safest way to transport young children is in a child safety seat in the rear seat of your car. Every state has a child passenger protection law. Small children (usually, up to age 4) are required to ride in approved child safety seats or to use safety belts, regardless of whether they're in the front or back seat. Don't think that an adult can safely hold a child. Even a belted adult cannot protect a child during a collision. A crash impact can pull an infant from an adult's arms with a force of 300 pounds or more. *Infants and young children should ride in child safety seats on every trip they take.*

Proper Use of Child Safety Seats

A child safety seat that is installed and used correctly will provide very effective crash protection for your child. If your child safety seat doesn't fit your car, don't try to "make" it work by make-shift measures. Incorrect use of a child safety seat can drastically reduce its effectiveness.

Make sure that your child is protected by carefully reading and following both sets of instructions. Also, read the car owner's manual for installation instructions and *make special*

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U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

note of seat belts that may not work with a child safety seat.

Remember:

❖ Select a child safety seat that fits your child and your car. Use it correctly, and use it every time your child rides in a motor vehicle.

❖ Infant seats are designed to be installed facing the rear of the vehicle to provide the most protection for very young passengers. *Never place a rear-facing safety seat in the front seat of a vehicle that has an air bag on the passenger side. The air bag could strike the back of the safety seat*

with enough force to seriously injure your child.

❖ Never let children ride in the bed of a truck, or sleep and play in the rear of any vehicle without the proper restraint.

❖ Place children in the back seat. This is the safest place for any child to be.

❖ Fasten the child seat harness snugly over the child's shoulders.

❖ Buy and use only child safety seats that meet DOT requirements. Look for this label on the safety seat:

"This child restraint system conforms to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards."

The stamp of manufacturing should be after January 1, 1981.

❖ Do not buy a used child safety seat if the instructions or DOT label are missing. Call the Auto Safety Hotline to obtain recall information. A used seat is not a bargain if it is not safe.

Cars and Child Safety Seats - Do They Fit Together?

All child safety seats are not compatible with all cars, seats, or restraint systems in cars. Make certain that your child safety seat will fit the car and seating position in which it will be used.

Some problems to avoid:

- ❖ A child safety seat that is too large to put into the back seat of the car, or has a base which extends too far over the edges of the car's seat. (At least 80 percent of the child safety seat base should be resting on the car's seat.)

- ❖ A child safety seat that is too large for the vehicle's safety belt system.

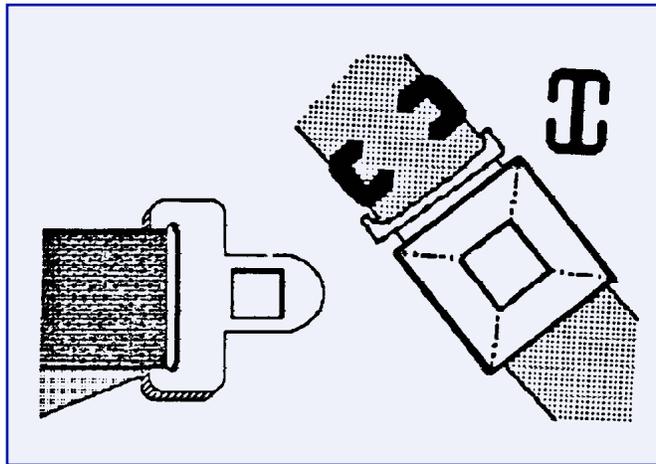
- ❖ A safety belt buckle that is impossible to latch or tighten through the child safety seat.

- ❖ Child safety seats with lift-up shields that are too high for the car. (The child cannot be removed easily from such a seat.)

If you have any of these problems, it's time to get a new safety seat. The best child safety seat for you is the one that fits your child, fits your car, and is convenient to use.

Latch Plates and Locking Clips

In some cars, the safety belt has a latch plate that moves freely along the belt to adjust its fit. (See Figure 1.) To use an infant or child safety seat with this type of belt system, a **locking clip** must be used. (See Figure 1.) This clip comes attached to the child safety seat, and in-



▲ Figure 1. A latch plate and a locking clip.

structions for using it are included. Some restraint systems require a **heavy duty locking clip**. You can obtain one from your dealer.

A locking clip is not needed if the belt is *manually adjustable*--that is, with a latch plate that does not move freely. Most vehicles have this kind of belt at the center rear seat.

Automatic Crash Protection and Child Safety Seats

Your new car may have air bags or automatic safety seats. Each is designed to provide additional protection to front seat occupants.

Air Bags provide front seat occupants with supplemental protection but they do not take the place of a safety belt or child safety seat. If children must ride in the front seat of a car equipped with air bags, they should be protected with a child safety seat, booster seat, or by the car's safety belt (for older children). Again, rear-facing child safety seats should never be

placed in the front seat of a car equipped with a passenger-side air bag. Place the child seat in the rear of the car.

Automatic Safety Belts: If your front-seat safety belts are motorized or attached directly to the door, then do not use a child safety seat in that seating position, unless the car manufacturer provides specific instructions on how to do so safely. (Check the vehicle owner's manual.)

Remember: Your Child's Safety Depends on You

When shopping for a new car, take your safety seat along to make sure it will fit the car you choose. When shopping for a child safety seat, test each model for fit and convenience in your car and let your child try it.

A shopping guide for child safety seats is available free of charge from:

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
NTS-13
400 7th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20590

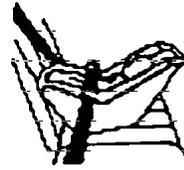
Many communities have child safety seat loaner programs; contact your local hospital or public health department for more information.

Your child's size and weight determines the type of child safety seat to use. The chart on the next page shows the correct types of child safety seats for each size of child. Use it when you look for a new safety seat. ■

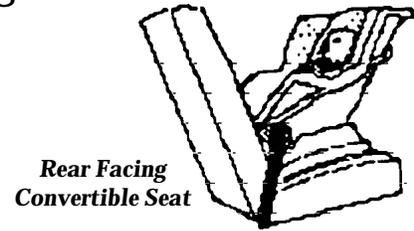
SIZE AND WEIGHT GUIDE FOR CHILD SAFETY SEATS

From Birth to 9-12 Months or 20 Pounds

Use an infant or convertible seat facing the rear.



Infant Seat



Rear Facing Convertible Seat

9-12 Months or 20 Pounds to 4 Years or 40 Pounds

Use a convertible or toddler seat.



Convertible Seat

4 Years or 40 Pounds to 8 Years or 70 Pounds

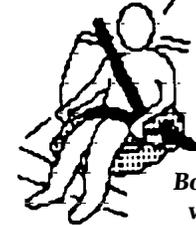
Keep children in convertible or toddler seats as long as they will fit.

When they have outgrown the convertible or toddler seat,

- ❖ **If the vehicle has a lap/shoulder belt in the rear seat, use a booster seat that positions the lap/shoulder belt correctly--secures the lap belt across the child's hips, and positions the shoulder belt so it does not cross the face or the front of the neck.**

OR

- ❖ **Use the rear lap/shoulder belt alone IF it fits properly--- does not cross the face or neck and fits across the child's hips and does not ride up across the stomach.**
- ❖ **If no rear lap/shoulder belt is available, use a shield-type booster seat restrained by the vehicle lap belt.**
- ❖ **If no other type of restraint is available, use the lap belt, positioned low on the hips and adjusted snugly.**



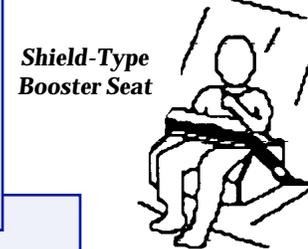
Booster Seat with Lap/Shoulder Belt

8 Years and Older or 70 Pounds or More

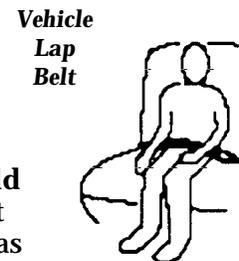
Use the protection system that is in the vehicle.



Vehicle Lap/Shoulder Belt



Shield-Type Booster Seat



Vehicle Lap Belt

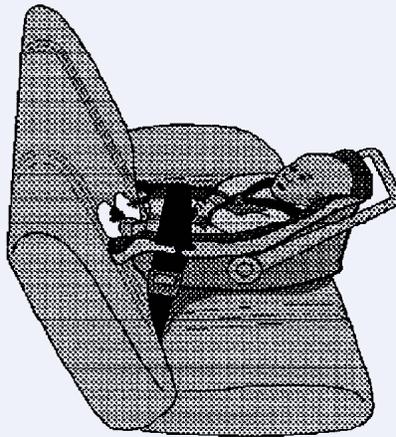
NOTE: Ages and weights are approximate. Manufacturer's instructions should be consulted for exact figures. Use only safety seats labeled: "This child restraint system conforms to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards" and has a stamp of manufacturing after January 1, 1981.

IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD SAFETY SEAT HAS A SAFETY PROBLEM, WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

AUTO SAFETY HOTLINE (800) 424-9393

If you think that your child safety seat has a safety problem, you can assist the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) by completing and mailing back the Child Safety Seat Questionnaire (CSSQ) included with this fact sheet, or by calling the Auto Safety Hotline.

The toll-free Hotline number, (800) 424-9393, can be reached from anywhere in the United States. If you are calling from the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, the number is (202) 366-0123. A Spanish-speaking operator is available weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Eastern time. The Hotline is available to



the hearing impaired through a teleprinter (TTY) number, (800) 424-9153. In the Washington, D.C. area the TTY number is (202) 366-7800.

If there are any documents relevant to your case, attach them to your completed CSSQ. If you are not sure of any information requested in the CSSQ, leave the box blank.

The CSSQ asks if you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of your report to the manufacturer. If so, check YES on the CSSQ and sign and date it.

Is your child safety seat registered? If not, you can register it with the manufacturer by calling the Auto Safety Hotline and requesting a registration form to complete.

Check out our home page for information on a variety of vehicle safety topics.
<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/>

Fold to show return address (no stamp needed) Fasten with tape or staple and mail

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (Continued):

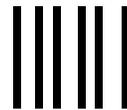
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Form Approved: O.M.B. No. 2127-0008

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